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## LARUELLE AND CAPITAL

ECONOFICTION, PHILOFICTION CAPITAL, MARXISM, NON-LARUELLE

Each statement of non-Marxism aims at a double methodization, either as axiom or as theorem, the latter remaining entirely related to the Marxist material, which is always different symptomatology. The specific operations of non-Marxism should also produce new theoretical objects, be they specified circumstances or concepts such as "non-proletariat" or "world of ideas", which are extracted and transformed from the Marxist material, in order to then function as hypotheses and thus enable the transformation of the axioms of Marxism within the framework of an axiomatic abstraction, but not in the sense of a neo-Marxist enrichment or enrichment of his statements, but rather as a transformation of his entire theoretical apparatus and its contents (concepts, statements, semiotics). According to Laruelle, Marxism lacks both a rigorously axiomatic, a transcendental-theoretical apparatus and a theoretical-pragmatic apparatus that enables the non-proletarian use of the theories of non-Marxism.

The world of ideas, the form of philosophy, the world of capital, the world of history – all these dual laruelles are by no means to be understood as the condensation or crystallization of concepts that are still under the dominance of philosophy, but function as formalized, non-conceptual symbols or unilateral aspects that characterize philosophy, history and capital in their identity-in-the-last instance. (Laruelle 2015: 159ff.) Such an identity is definitely not only that of capital, which behaves desolately and downright autistically towards itself, but for laruelle it encompasses the mixture of every possible capital with its philosophical legitimations, which are equally possible. Laruelle by no means understands the concept of capital as a purely economic term in order to think of it independently of its ideological representation or its philosophizability. When Laruelle speaks of "conjuncture" (concrete situation, constellation or business cycle), he means the experimental and at the same time non-empirical way that makes it possible in the first place to extract objects from a historical discipline such as economics in order to reinterpret and transform them in specific theoretical practices. The conjuncture form is considered universal or univocal for each singular case, that is, the temporal determinations are supplemented by universal determinants qua "identity in the last instance", which in turn implies treating the historized categories of the sciences purely as material. It is then necessary to pass from conjuncture to unijuncture in the last instance. The form of the non-marxist object is universal, that is, it encompasses itself and every possible content X, and to think this succeeds because the object is that of a thought that is itself univocal (uni-material and determined in the final instance). The object already implies the hypothesis of a unified theory, which in turn comprises the object of a philosophy structure plus a regional object X (economy). Now, however, Marxism imposes on non-Marxism to leave philosophy and to turn more to the phenomenon X in order to finally situate capital as a regional object in it. The formula "philosophy+capital"

then clearly emphasizes capital here.

One can definitely not limit capital to the concept of the region, whereby capital by no means exclusively possesses a transregional and transgenic force (as is the case, incidentally, with almost every region), but it appears as a force that determines certain regions more strongly than others do. Non-Marxism sees this assertion as a symptom of the world of ideas. Usually the economy is understood as an ontic region, as a regional object or as a regional science, but in the worst sense also as ideology or optionally as all-economics, insofar as it includes the real philosophy of social life. As a critique of political economy, Marxism puts an end to such ideas, that is, to economically and philosophically inspired interpretations of social phenomena. Although the pattern of interpretation lives on in the Marxist conception of "base/ superstructure" and "productive forces", Marxism at least rudimentarily outlines the radical, real and transcendental conditions of a critical generic science of economics that begins to replace the philosophically inspired interpretation of economics. In the three volumes of *Capital*, Marx repeatedly emphasizes the independent character of capital criticism in relation to philosophy, giving the discursive conceptual capital the status of a determinant and explanatory factor of the internal history of capitalism (even of history in general) and of the social and political, thus ridding itself in the same breath of the fundamental claims of philosophy. Marx gives capital a transregional "value" and weights it more heavily as discursivity or concept than the concepts of philosophy. But for Laruelle all this still happens in an insufficient way, for example when Marx poses a series of problems in the suprapersonal socio-economic realm, which have the task of explaining this realm in its structural conditions for him, but he couples this again and again with the philosophical idea, which consists of calling the proletariat, making history itself, or perceiving the historical task of transforming history and bringing it to a good end. (ibid.:163)

For Laruelle, the task now is to demonstrate the non-Marxist operation of universalizing capital in capitalism. This does not at all mean adopting the neoliberal ideology, according to which everything and everything in the world must now be economized or capitalized, but rather this contains precisely the critique of this ideology. The non-Marxist position insists that there is a unilateral identity of capital qua determining-in-the-last instance. Laruelle thus attempts to dissolve the disastrous Marxist amphibolism between capital and capitalism. (The identity of capitalism is not that of capital.) This can now be understood from the figure of unilateral duality. In universalization or empowerment, the essence of capitalism is "is and/or is not capital". But in universalization or determination in the last instance, the identity of capitalism is neither capital nor is it not capital. For "Universal capitalism" no longer describes a purely economic formation or situation for Laruelle, not even a possible situation, and certainly not a maximum capitalism in terms of its intensity, its destructive power and its capacity for extension. The assumption of a phenomenon that is supposedly to be understood as purely socio-economic contains here *sui generis* explicitly philosophical determinations. (ibid.: 164)

If Laruelle now speaks of "universal capital" instead of "capital", not in the sense of a historical-social formation, but of a universal "logic" to which all economic, social and political phenomena are assigned and subordinated, then he wants to treat the monetary profit production of capital merely as the special case of a general surplus production, with which "universal capital" not only generates added value, but also extracts (or even blackmails) the surplus (from) of communication, (from) speed, (from) the urgency of change and (from) the productivity of labour. Or it even generates the surplus through the production of knowledge, images, marketing and slogans. (Laruelle 2012: 16f.) This "universal capital" works more stubbornly than any other historical formation on seizing the surplus, it is more active and pursues, sorts and directs people more intensively than any previous form of control, it acts softer and at the same time more deceitful than all previous forms of frontal attack, but remains perverted like any form of espionage and accusation and at the same time appears less brutal than open annihilation, less ritualized than inquisition – or to put it briefly: The "universal capital" proceeds softly and dispersively, instantaneously and maliciously. It is pure harassment. (ibid.)

For Laruelle, the "essence of capital" definitely does not seem to be that of Marx's (monetary) capital, it does not seem to be economically founded here. As can still be shown elsewhere, Laruelle largely agrees with Heidegger on the question of the essence of technology, which could make the assumption of a secret theoretical relationship between Laruelle and Heidegger somewhat more concrete, especially in the determination of the "essence of capital". For the philosopher Michael Eldred, who here follows Heidegger, the "essence of capital" can neither be tied to a sum of money that increases nor to the attitude of a subject that is particularly greedy or purely speculates on monetary gain. One could read Heidegger with Eldred in such a way that Heidegger understands capital neither as self-propagating money, nor as subjective greed for money, but rather as "a calculating, enriching way of unearthing everything that is, in whose clearing everything appears as usable, i.e. as potentially profitable. (Eldred 2015) And Eldred adds the significant sentence: "Profit prevails as a being of historical truth (unconcealment)." (Ibid.) In such an inescapable skill lies the "essence of capital," which, without having to be figurative at all, can be translated into money and has a price. The "gainst" designates the skilful way of unveiling the existing, impregnated with the hunt for usable (gain), with which the "gainst" directs human actions and social structures. The multiplication of money capital qua money capital appears here only as a special case of winning in general, which, however, can still be quantified, calculated and measured by money. Laruelle's definition of "universal capital" does not seem too far removed from such a reading by Heidegger. This kind of generalization of the concept of capital is to be rejected as an inadmissible anthropologization. If one adds some further philosophical implications, then Laruelle quickly leads to the concept of "super-capitalism" or "universal capitalism". Laruelle points out here that capital ever needs political and philosophical legitimation. (Laruelle 2015: 169 ff.)

Deleuze/Guattari define axioms in the thousand plateaus as operative statements, as the semiological form of capital and thus as essential components of production, circulation and consumption. (Deleuze/Guattari 1992: 640) In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze/Guattari discuss the axiomatic of capital in a similar way to Laruelle or Gilbert Simondon. Whereas for Deleuze/Guattari capital,

however, operates with an axiomatic of abstract, meaningless quantities, for Simondon the axiomatic operates on a different level, namely as the constitution of intensive series from which the technological sciences develop. Where for Deleuze/Guattari the axiomatic of capital must be understood in the strict economic sense or within a socio-economic conception, for Simondon, and later for Laruelle too, capital power must be understood as the result of an individuation that encompasses the economic, technical, political and social spheres, perhaps in a similar way as Bichler/Nitzan defined capital as economic-political power. (Cf. Bichler/Nitzan 2009) For Laruelle, the object of non-Marxism is never the capital form alone, but also what is called the world of ideas, insofar as capital is also seen from its political and philosophical side.

Laruelle tries to subsume the following facts under the concept of "super-capitalism": 1) The global functioning of "societies", which must be defined. 2) In its generality, it is always also philosophy-form or form-world, which Laruelle characterizes as internal duplication. 3) This form is specified in a dominant way by capital, because the economy still has priority over politics, philosophy, etc. here. (Laruelle 2015: 169) The concept of "super-capitalism" serves Laruelle to bring into play the problem of abstract functioning or that of the abstract machine, and he is less concerned with the problem of substance or content. Rather, the functioning of supercapitalism is its substance and its content, and more specifically it is capital itself that fuses its economic and philosophical-ideological materials within a universal form of the world today. Supercapitalism is in perpetual excess or in search of the permanent surplus (this extraction of the surplus from everything possible has no quantitatively evaluable price); The soul of the world is supercapitalism as the extraction or blackmailing of the surplus from everything that exists and not only from the living labor force, yes, after all, the extraction of the surplus still refers to capital itself in so far as it extracts surplus from itself qua a kind of cannibalism, and this on the basis of the respective local bases. This kind of functioning, topologically "regulated" by the infinite search for the surplus, is to be understood by Laruelle as the essence of universal capital in the ultra-economic or supercapitalist sense, or, to put it another way, the essence here is universal capital as we have described it above. For Laruelle, globalized capitalism does not primarily appear to be a quantitative problem of planetary extension, but rather sees a new supercapitalism blossoming here, which not only forces the extraction of the surplus from everything and everyone, but also necessarily an "ideological" one in order to sneak a surplus out of it. (ibid.) We will adopt and correct Laruelles' position in the section on modern finance.

In conclusion, it can be said that for Laruelle it is by no means a question of emptying Marxism of its content or alternatively rearranging it with new content in order to reassemble it according to the present socio-economic circumstances, but one should indeed treat its materialistic, dialectical, economic and political content as simple symptoms that must be reinterpreted and, above all, transformed in the course of their problematization, in order finally to transform thinking, which perhaps still wants to move according to reality, into thinking according to the real. There is no need, as the academic left assumes, for a phenomenological Marx without Marxism (Henry) or for a structural Marxism without Marx (Althusser), but rather to demand an impossible Marxism that knows that capital itself is a symptom that overdetermines any resistance, but in the last instance itself is determined by the resistance that was there first and never ceases to resist the front of capital. (Ebd.119f.) Laruelle in a sense calls for a new poverty and secrecy of non-Marxism, which always refers to the transcendental figure human-in-person and rebel-as-person as radical strangers.

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